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PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION NECIA QUAST VISITS SUGH D OBLAST



Sughd Oblast, Tajikistan, October 9, 2008. United States Deputy Chief of Mission Necia Quast paid a familiarization visit to the Sughd Oblast on a tour of U.S. Government funded projects conducted in partnership with local government and non-governmental organizations. Her trip was part of the embassy's regular outreach to the oblast to enhance cooperation in health, education, and support for civil society in the vital northern region of Tajikistan.

In Chkalovsk, she visited Tajikistan's first Shelter for Minors operated in partnership with USAID, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The shelter offers protection to victims of trafficking, as well as preventive and rehabilitative vocational training. In Gafurov she stopped by the Center for Girls, a one-of-a-kind project run in partnership among USAID, the Eurasia Foundation, and the "New Generation" NGO. The Center offers vocational training in knitting, sewing, cooking, and computer literacy to girls who did not finish secondary school.

She next stop was a tour of the newly renovated Khujand Teacher Training Institute. The United States Department of Defense provided \$72,000 for the project supervised by U.S. Army Civil Affairs team and implemented by the Tajik "Sohibkor 2001" construction firm. The renovation made structural improvements to make the building withstand the severe winters in the Sughd Oblast. The Teacher's Training Institute is the only facility of its kind in the province that provides expert pedagogical training to educators in primary and advanced education. Educators throughout the province return to the institute every five years for re-certification.

Ms. Quast met also with Andrea Schindler, the Regional English Language Officer from the U.S. Embassy in Astana, who conducted a pedagogical seminar for Sughd secondary school teachers of English and David Holzmeyer, who arrived in Khujand in September and will live in Khujand for a year and provide regular training for English instructors and students at secondary schools and universities in the Sughd Oblast.

Later Ms. Quast drove to Istravshan to visit the District Center of Health #1, a USAID Center of Excellence healthcare provider operated in partnership with ZdravPlus. The Center employs doctors with special training in family-medicine in a facility that is equipped with modern training and office technologies. Besides the District Center in Istravshan, USAID supports two other "Centers of Excellence" in Konibodom and Dushanbe. The centers integrate clinical practice guidelines, quality improvement, rational drug use, health promotion, and other priority programs into service delivery.